

October 27, 2011

## South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

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## DEPARTMENT SPONSORS MINI CONFERENCES

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) held Mini-conferences in Rapid City, Pierre and Brookings this week. These one day training sessions are an opportunity for Department staff to bring our state's network of county and tribal Veterans Service Officers (VSO) together for training and updates on veteran's benefits and services.

Ron Woolery and Kathie Crook of the St. Paul Pension Management Center attended each of the sessions and provided instruction on veterans and widows pension, burial benefits and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). They also updated the VSO's on the Veterans Benefits Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-275) which provides for increases in the burial and plot allowance for certain veterans, and also includes minor amendments to DIC and pension benefits for certain individuals.

SDDVA conducts one day Mini-conferences for the VSO's in the spring and fall of each year. In addition, they conduct a three day Veterans Benefits School each year for additional training. The 2012 school will once again be held at the Ramkota Hotel in Pierre on August 27-29.

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## SDNG COUNTERDRUG PROGRAM RECEIVES FULCRUM SHIELD AWARD

The South Dakota National Guard's Counterdrug program received the 2011 Fulcrum Shield Award during the 21st annual Secretary of Defense Red Ribbon Week Awards ceremony at the Pentagon Hall of Heroes in Washington, D.C., Thursday, Oct. 20, for their support of South Dakota's Youth-to-Youth (Y2Y) program. The Fulcrum Shield Award was created by the Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counter-Narcotics to recognize youth organizations affiliated with the military that have made recognizable strides in spreading the anti-drug message throughout their communities. The Fulcrum Shield Award, first presented in 2002, is named in honor of five military personnel from Fort Bliss, Texas, who were killed in an aircraft accident in 1999 while on a counter-drug reconnaissance mission in Columbia.

South Dakota Y2Y is a youth-led and adult-guided program that harnesses the powerful influence of peer pressure by making it a positive force that encourages young people to live free of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs. South Dakota Y2Y focuses its programs on issues that teens are most likely to face while growing up today: alcohol and drugs, negative peer pressure, AIDS and sexuality, suicide, education and career concerns, self-concept and community responsibility. The program also emphasizes the development of necessary life skills. Students attend training and workshops that establish and enhance communication skills, decision-making skills, and problem solving skills, so they will be better equipped to handle any situation.

Y2Y goes beyond merely presenting information on the dangers of alcohol and other drug use by capitalizing on the emotional involvement that comes from working in small groups. The program encourages personal growth, teambuilding, teaches strategies that teens use to change their own environments, and provides alternatives to drug use.

The SDNG's Drug Demand Reduction program's affiliation with Y2Y provides an opportunity for the program to grow by recruiting military youth members to become actively involved in the power of Y2Y.

This partnership has been invaluable to military programs, and has helped spread the message to communities all over the state of South Dakota through deployment events, unit Family Readiness activities, and SDNG Military Youth Camp. The Y2Y program helps to build confidence in young people. Y2Y has numerous examples of eighth and ninth-grade students who started out being very shy and introverted. After being involved in the Y2Y program these young people are then willing to stand up on a stage in front of 200 of their peers and speak out for what they believe in, to educate and promote a drug free lifestyle.

The students who are part of Y2Y return to their home schools and have active Y2Y groups that have become part of their everyday life. These groups lead alcohol, tobacco and other drug use prevention efforts within their communities and schools. They plan and provide drug free alternative activities throughout the year within their communities to support a healthy lifestyle and for peer to peer support.



## REDEFINING HOW CARE AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO GULF WAR VETERANS

The VA's Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses Task Force has completed the draft of a comprehensive report that will outline how the VA addresses the concerns of veterans who deployed during the Gulf War in 1990 and 1991.

Notification of the draft written report is published in the *Federal Register*, and the draft written report addresses seven areas where the VA provides services for this group of Veterans.

Over the past year, the task force has examined, evaluated, designated and adjusted the initial roadmap outlined in last year's report. The VA has designated steps to improve care and services to Gulf War I Veterans. These improvements will become a part of the VA's culture and operations.

This year's report focuses on improvements in the delivery of health care for Gulf War Veterans. One of the most substantial additions is modifications to clinical care models used for Gulf War Veterans, which is the most critical point of service the VA provides. There are better linkages between specialty knowledge and services at the basic point of care. Clinical research and development is significantly contributing new concepts and methods to clinical practice and clinical education throughout the VA.

Two new positions were established in the Office of Research and Development for deployment and Desert Shield and Desert Storm health-related issues. Both positions have been filled and are enhancing research efforts for Gulf War Veterans and will continue to do so in the coming years.

The VA is also strengthening partnerships and medical surveillance to address the potential health impacts on veterans from the environmental exposures on today's battlefield. Additionally, the VA continues to use social media to improve communication with Gulf War Veterans.

The VA is seeking public comments on the draft written report before final publication. The public notice and instructions for how to submit electronic and comments via postal mail will be posted at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and the draft written report will be open for comment for 30 days. In addition, the VA recognizes that a great number of Gulf War Veterans use the Internet on a daily basis to share their ideas and concerns, so the VA has also created a public discussion board on the seven recommendations at: <http://vagulfwartaskforce.uservoice.com/>.

To view the report without making recommendations, please visit VA's website at [http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/Draft\\_2011\\_GWVI-TF\\_Report.pdf](http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/Draft_2011_GWVI-TF_Report.pdf).

## SFVAHCS CPAC TRANSITION

The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System is scheduled for the Consolidated Patient Account Center (CPAC) transition in April 2012. Because of this reorganization, the responsibility for insurance verification, revenue utilization review, billing, and accounts receivables will be transferred to the CPAC in Leavenworth, KS.

The CPAC will have several employees working locally in Sioux Falls – the Revenue Coordinator, the Revenue Utilization Review Nurse, and three Facility Revenue Technicians. These staff will be employees of the CPAC, but will work between the CPAC and the local facility.

Some types of billing such as CHAMPVA and Tricare will remain a local responsibility. Questions regarding the CPAC transition may be referred to Aaron Cork, current Revenue Coordinator, at 605-336-3230, Ext. 6784.

# SD CENTER FOR ENTERPRISE OPPORTUNITY TO HOST BUSINESS WORKSHOP FOR VETERANS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL

The South Dakota Center for Enterprise Opportunity (SD CEO) at Black Hills State University will host a business seminar in partnership with the Airman and Family Readiness Center, Ellsworth Air Force Base (AFB) and the South Dakota National Guard on "How to Start Your Own Business" Wednesday, Nov. 9, from 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at the University Center-Rapid City. This presentation will also be available via DDN at the following locations: University Center Room 113 in Rapid City; BHSU Library Room 009 in Spearfish; Sisseton Middle School in Sisseton; SDSU SPC 214 in Brookings; LATI in Watertown; and HSC Training Center in Yankton.

The seminar information is intended for veterans, service-disabled veterans, active-duty service members in the Transition Assistance Program, Reservists and National Guard members. Current spouses are also welcome to attend, as well as widows/widowers of a service member or veteran who died during service or suffered a service-connected disability.

The SBA's Patriot Express loan initiative, for veterans and members of the military community wanting to establish or expand small businesses will be discussed. The average amount is \$82,000, with nearly 15 percent going to military spouses. It can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real estate. Presenters will also discuss how to develop a marketing plan, services of the SBDC, how to contract with the federal government and the SBA 504 loan program.

Registration ends Nov. 7. For more information or to register visit [www.BHSU.edu/SDCEO](http://www.BHSU.edu/SDCEO), or call 605-642-6435.

**South Dakota Center for Enterprise Opportunity (SD CEO)**

**Attention:**

*Veterans, service-disabled veterans, active-duty service members in the Transition Assistance Program, Reservists, and National Guard members, current spouses of any of the above, and the widowed spouse of a service member or veteran who died during service, or of a service-connected disability...*

**This workshop is for you.**

## "How to Start Your Own Business" Workshop

For Veterans and members of the Military community

Workshop

**Wednesday, Nov. 9, 2011 | 9 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.**

**University Center-Rapid City**

**Rapid City, S.D.**

**Registration:** Online at [www.BHSU.edu/SDCEO](http://www.BHSU.edu/SDCEO) or call Brittnei at 605.642.6435

**Free Seminar: Pre-Registration Required, Deadline: Monday, Nov. 7**

- **SBA Introduction & Overview - Patriot Express Loan** by Jim Shaw, Senior Area Manager, U.S. Small Business Administration. The Patriot Express loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases. The average loan amount is about \$82,000. Nearly 15 percent of these loans have gone to military spouses.
- **SD Center for Enterprise Opportunity Developing a Marketing Plan** by Helen Merriam, Director, SD-CEO
- **Small Business Development Center** by Tim Coupland, Business Consultant, SBDC
- **Contracting with the Federal Government** by Sandy Evers, President, Project Solutions, Inc.
- **SBA 504 Loan Program** by Fran White, SBA 504 Loan officer, Black Hills Community Economic Development



**Black Hills State University**  
-Transforming Lives-

Sponsored by the SD CEO in partnership with the Airman and Family Readiness Center, Ellsworth AFB and the South Dakota National Guard.

[www.sdceo.org](http://www.sdceo.org)

The SD CEO is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). SBA provides financial assistance to SD CEO through the U.S. Small Business Administration's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) program.




## SD MEDEVAC TEAM READY FOR ACTION

Every morning flight crews from Forward Support Medical Team, Company C, 1st Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment, South Dakota Army National Guard, stationed at Al Asad Air Base in Iraq, head out to the flight line to bring their UH-60A Black Hawk helicopters through maintenance and pre-flight inspections, getting them ready for a mission which they hope they will never have to perform.

Charlie Company has three teams spread throughout the central region of Iraq, and is one of two aerial medical evacuation companies responsible for in-flight medical care for the entire country. The FSMT here is responsible for the northwest sector of the central region. The company is comprised of pilots, mechanics, crew chiefs, flight medics and support personnel split between both the South Dakota and Montana Army National Guard.

"At home we drill separately—each in our own state, but while deployed we all get to come together," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Alissa Bare, pilot and team tactical operations officer. "It's neat, like we've never been separated." For many members of this team, this is their first deployment, as well as their first real-world mission.

The MEDEVAC mission is very specific mission of timing and skill, these helicopters are sometimes put through environment conditions that other crews often don't face and as such require precision maintenance.

When not on mission or performing maintenance, the team is constantly training to ward of complacency and to improve them-

selves personally and vocationally.

With the upcoming transition from American forces to Iraqi, the team might not be as busy as they thought they'd be, but they understand their importance in the region, supporting the remaining troops on the ground.



## VETERANS DAY DISCOUNTS

Veteran's Day is soon approaching and there are many restaurants and companies who want to thank our veterans and military service personnel by providing them with discounts or a free meal. The following website provides details on the discounts offered (<http://themilitarywallet.com/veterans-day-free-meals-and-discounts/>).

Keep in mind, most companies require some form of military ID – including a U.S. Uniform Services ID Card (active/reserve/retired), Current Leave and Earnings Statement (LES), Photograph in uniform, wearing uniform (if your service permits), Veterans Organization Card (e.g., American Legion and VFW), DD214, discharge paperwork, or other form of identification.

We would suggest that you call ahead to verify locations, times, and participation. Many of the listed companies are franchises and may have different policies for each respective state.

## VETERANS INFORMATION FAIR



The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System, invites all veterans, their families, and area residents to the second annual Veterans Information Fair & Community Open House on November 1, 2011. This will be an opportunity for veterans - especially those who do not use VA benefits - to learn more about "*the best care anywhere.*"

The open house will be from 5:00 – 7:00 PM at the VA medical center located at 2501 W. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, Sioux Falls.

All Veterans, their families, and other interested parties are invited and encouraged to come. VA staff will be on hand to explain a variety of health care services, eligibility, compensation benefits, and VA career opportunities. In addition, health screenings and tours of the medical center will be available. Refreshments and child care services will be furnished.

For flyers, brochures, or more information, please contact Shirley Redmond, Public Affairs Officer, at 605-333-6889.

## COMMUNITIES CONTINUE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE MILITARY

The Rapid City Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee luncheon hosted by the 28 Munitions Squadron, was held at Ellsworth Air Force Base on October 20th. This committee is comprised of local business men and women who support the military community. They alternate monthly luncheon meetings between Ellsworth Air Force Base and the SD National Guard facilities.

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) annual luncheon was held Friday, October 21, at Ellsworth AFB. MOAA is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest Veterans Service Organization. Brigadier General Paul G. Cohen, USAFR (Ret) from Omaha who is a member of MOAA's Board of Directors was the guest speaker. He spoke of the current financial situation of the country, the potential impact on the military and veterans community and what MOAA is doing to stop any drastic cuts.

Paul Gremse, field officer for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs participated in both of these events.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

November 1—SFVAHCS Veterans Benefits Fair and Community Open House—Sioux Falls

November 11—Grand Opening of Women of War Center

November 11—Veterans Day

November 17—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Aberdeen

November 18—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Chamberlain

November 19—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Piedmont

November 24-25—State Offices Closed

December 2—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Watertown

December 3—SD Veterans Council Legislator Roundtable—Sioux Falls

December 10—National Wreaths Across America Remembrance

December 26—State Offices Closed

January 2—State Offices Closed

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